DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 259 427 CS 505 003

AUTHOR Medcalf, Lawrence D.
TITLE The Participation and Success of Women in CEDA Debate.
PUB DATE Nov 84
NOTE 13p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Speech Communication Association (70th, Chicago, IL, November 1-4, 1984).
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Communication Research; Communication Skills; Comparative Analysis; Competition; *Debate; *Females; Higher Education; *Males; Performance Factors; *Persuasive Discourse; Public Speaking; *Sex Differences; Speech Communication; Success
IDENTIFIERS Cross Examination Debate Association

ABSTRACT

A study was conducted to investigate the success of women contestants in Cross Examination Debate Association (CEDA) debate. The study sought to determine whether (1) CEDA is a more attractive debate activity for women, (2) men are more successful in CEDA debate than women, (3) the gender mix of debate teams favors all-male teams over all-female or mixed-gender teams, and (4) all-male teams are more popular than all-female or mixed-sex teams. Seven tournaments from 1984 were studied. The results indicated that men outnumbered women by more than two to one, while seven out of ten participants in each of the tournaments were male. Many females who began debate activity in the fall did not continue it through the spring. Males appeared to have a higher success rate than females in CEDA. Although there were more two-male teams than two-female or mixed-sex teams, they did not exist in the same disproportionate ratio as the number of males and females in the tournament. Finally, the study indicated that while male teams did enjoy a slightly higher success rate than the other two combinations, mixed-sex and female teams also have a high success rate. (HTH)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION
CENTER (ERIC)
X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

ED259427

The Participation and Success of Women in CEDA Debate

Dr. Lawrence D. Medcalf
San Francisco State University

Speech Communication Association Convention
Chicago, Illinois
November 1-4, 1984

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Lawrence D. Medcalf
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

CS 505 003

Since the beginning of intercollegiate debate there undoubtably has been much controversy over the role of women in the activity. At its inception debate was seen as being an exclusively male activity, probably since a college education was viewed with the same constraints. As women entered colleges, or created their own institutions, they also entered the arena of competitive debate. However these areana were well segregated also with seperate divisions for men and women. Women who were brave enough to enter into a partnership with a male colleque were obliged to debate in the men's division. Even though eventually these "sperate but equal" divisions were dispensed with the attitudinal barriers against women as debaters has been slow to erode. Debate is still viewed by most, I suspect, as being a male activity and the accomplished woman debater is viewed as the exception rather than as the rule.

The purpose of this paper is to investigate the success of women debaters in CEDA debate. The Cross Examination Debate Association was implemented with the avowed goal of providing students with an alternative form of debate to the traditional policy format. The vision of the founders of CEDA was to offer a debate activity which would place more emphasis on the qualities of reasoning, persuasive speaking, humor and direct communication with an audience, while at the same time deemphasizing an excessive use of evidence, complex structures of argumentation and a mode of delivery which could not be comprehended by anyone outside of the arena. On the surface those goals could be seen as providing a more favorable environment for women and could lead us to assume that women are more attracted to CEDA debate and receive more rewards as debaters. This paper thus seeks to provide answers to four basic questions: 1) Is CEDA debate a more attractive debate activity for women, 2) Are men more successful in CEDA debate than women, 3) Does the gender mix of debate

**Dr. Medcalf, the off-spring of a mixed-sex debate team from Hanover College, is an Associate Professor and Director of Forensics at San Francisco State University, He is grateful to his Assistants, Ms. Mari Maguire and Ms. Janet Brehe, for their constant reminders of the role of women in Forensics, and for the need to change the title of this paper.

teams favor all men teams over all women or mixed sex teams, and 4) Are all male teams more popular than all female and mixed sex teams?

Previous Research

Previous research on gender participation and success in debate is scanty and, at best, incomplete. More importantly no previous research has dealt exclusively with CEDA debate. While other research, for the most part, does not identify the debate format investigated, the dates of the research would allow us to make the safe assumption that debaters involved in the research sample were engaged in policy debate. The premise that CEDA may provide a better and more attractive forum for women debaters can be supported by basic research in gender communication. Eakins and Eakins identify argumentation as " . . . strong in tone, fact bound, and which thrives on evidence." They continue by pointing out "this style lends itself well to argument but it is a mode that does not appear to be comfortable for a number of women. Many females find the argumentation style not only difficult to use, but inhibiting when it is used against them."[1] Eakins and Eakins also support two other basic contentions about gender in competitive debate, first, men would be more dominant in debate and second, men would be more successful. They observe " . . . argumentation behaviors were considered primarily male characteristics, rather than standard behavior for both sexes."[2] Furthermore, gender studies in communication behavior reveal that "Women's words are not always received the same way men's words are. . . . apparently society rewards males, but not females for intellectual

1) Eakins, Barbara Westbrook and R. Gene Eakins, Sex Differences in Human Communication, Houghton Miffin Company: Boston, 1978, p. 49.

2) Eakins and Eakins, p. 49.

argument. Perhaps women are even subtley penalized in this regard. Research demonstrated that the same communication coming from males and females got different receptions."[3]

Beyond the field of gender communication research, others have investigated the role of women in intercollegiate debate and have attempted to determine if gender bears a relationship to success. Hensley and Strother in 1968 examined the results of 6 years of the University Nevada, Reno Great Western Tournament to discover the effects of same sex and mixed sex teams. Their results indicated that "the team which appears to possess a sizeable advantage over its opposition is one composed of a male and a female" while the "study fail(s) to give any credence to the superiority of team composed of two males or to the inferiority of a team composed of two females."[4] While such results are worthwhile, the study was hampered by the size of their subjects. They examined only 720 ballots accumulated over a six year period, which comprised only 56% of the total participants. Hayes and McAdoo in 1972 studied speaker positions on ballots over a three year period and discovered that women debaters receive more "one" and "three" position rankings than do their male counterparts, and less "two" and "four" position rankings. They then concluded that "they (females) consistently do a better job of meeting the evaluative criteria for debating." [5] Again, while such information is important to research in this general area, many a debate coach will sadly testify to the simple fact that often speaker rankings in a round and winning the round are two entirely different concepts. In 1978 Rosen, Dean and Willis examined three high school tournaments in Kansas City and concluded that "mixed sex teams appear to be superior."[6] Unfortunately the study was unconclusive and examined only a limited

3) Eakins and Eakins, p. 51.

4) W.E. Hensley and D. B. Strother, "Success in Debate," Speech Teacher, 17 (September 1968), p. 236

5) M. T. Hayes and J. McAdoo, "Debate Performance: Difference Between Male and Female Rankings," Journal of the American Forensic Association, 8 (Winter 1972), p. 129.

number of ballots (255) from high school tournaments in one geographical area. Finally Friedley and Nadler in 1983 studied the perceived gender differences in college debate. Their research documents that in 1983 at the National Debate Tournament (Policy) only 18 of the 124 students were women (14%).[7] The rest of their research is excellent and revealing, but unfortunately for this paper, deals exclusively with perception of gender in Forensics rather than with actuality.

In summary, however, previous research gives us a solid foundation from which to proceed with other types of research. We know that male and females communicate in different modes, and that competitive debate results may be influenced by the gender makeup of debate teams. We can conclude that while debate is a male dominated activity, there is reason to believe that mixed sex teams are more successful than same sex teams.

Methodology of the Study

This research selected seven tournaments from the Spring 1984 CEDA debate schedule.[8] In an attempt to avoid regional bias, three tournaments were chosen from the Northern California Forensic Association (Governors Cup, California State University Fresno, and University of San Francisco), two from the Northwest Forensic Association (University of Puget Sound and Pacific Lutheran University), and two tournaments which traditionally attract large numbers of schools from throughout the country (San Luis Obispo and University of Nevada, Reno). Since

6) Nathan Rosen, Larry Dean and Frank Willis, "The Outcome of Debate in Relation Gender, Side and Position," Journal of the American Forensic Association, 15 (Summer 1978), p 17-21

7) Sheryl A. Friedley and Marjorie K. Nadler, "Perceived Gender Differences in Forensic Participation and Leadership," Unpublished paper presented to SCA Convention, Washington D.C., November 1983.

8) The Spring 1984 CEDA Resolution was "Resolved: Federal Government Censorship is Justified to Protect the National Security."

Since these last two tournaments offered only one Open Division, further consistency was attempted by eliminating Novice Division results from the sampling. Thus, in the first five tournaments only Junior and Senior divisions were tabulated and no attempt was made to differentiate between the results of those two divisions. In total 658 debaters, comprising 329 teams and 2246 ballots were used in this study.

The Results

Participation by Gender

This research first discovered that, indeed, CEDA debate is, like it's Policy counterpart, dominated in numbers by men. Even though the statistice compared to the Friedley and Nadler are better than their 14%, it is still obvious that more men than women are participating in intercollegiate debate. Men outnumbered women on better than a 2 to 1 ratio at all seven tournaments and over all in the tournaments surveyed 7 out of every 10 debaters are men. One of the few encouraging statistics is

TOURNAMENT	MEN	WOMEN	M %	F %
Governor's Cup	21	9	.700	.300
U.S.F.	23	9	.718	.281
C.S.U. Fresno	55	15	.782	.217
Univ. Puget Sound	49	27	.644	.355
Pacific Lutheran	42	18	.700	.300
San Luis Obispo	79	29	.731	.268
Univ. Nevada, Reno	205	77	.726	.273
Total	474	184	.719	.281

that there is not a major difference between the first six tournaments and the University of Nevada, Reno tournament. The Reno tournament, misnamed "CEDA Nationals" by many, is viewed as the largest and most important of all CEDA tournaments offered throughout the year. Schools are restricted to entering only 3 teams in the tournament and this gives the impression that the Reno tournament attracts each schools "best" teams. Hayes and McAdoo speculate that women debaters may be viewed by their coaches as not being among the "best" debaters on the squad and may not be able to handle large competition.[9] At least these statistics would indicate that view is not in effect.

The statistics improve when we investigate the gender make-up of teams entered in tournament competition. Hayes and McAdoo again assert that the predominate view of debate coaches is that male teams are superior to female teams[10] and Hensley and Strother argue that coaches are "reluctant" to pair a strong male debater with a female unless the female is exceptionally strong as well.[11] If those concepts were true we would naturally expect then to see an equally unbalanced number of two men teams rather than mixed sex or two women teams entered in tournament competition. This is not true. The balance between two men teams and mixed sex teams is better than percent difference between men and women entered in a tournament. This would indicate that coaches, and perhaps debaters as well, are recognizing that breaking up men debaters may not necessarily weaken the squad effort, and perhaps that men are recognizing the parity of women debaters in competition. On the other side

9) Hayes and McAddo, p. 127.
10) Hayes and McAdoo, p. 127.
11) Hensley and Strother, p 236.

of the coin, however, is the realization that two women teams still tend to be a rarity in competitive settings. This may be due to the simple lack of women debaters on the squad, or a perceived concept that two women teams are not very strong.

Tournament	MM Teams	MW Teams	WW Teams	MM%	MW%	WW%
Governor's Cup	8	5	2	.533	.333	.133
U.S.F.	8	7	1	.500	.437	.062
C.S.U. Fresno	21	13	1	.600	.371	.028
Univ. Puget Sound	16	17	5	.421	.447	.131
Pacific Lutheran	15	12	3	.500	.400	.100
San Luis Obispo	30	19	5	.555	.351	.092
Univ. Nevada, Reno	82	41	18	.581	.291	.127
Total	180	114	35	.548	.346	.106

Regional difference do exist, however they do not appear to be great. The two tournaments in the Northwest Forensic Association had basically the same ratio of men to women debaters, however both the tournaments investigated had a more even mixture of two men teams to mixed sex teams.

Success by Gender

Given the basic concept that an average debate team will win about half of its debate rounds, we would expect that this rule of thumb would hold true for all teams regardless of the gender identification of the team. This study attempted to discover two different facts concerning success, as measured by wins, for men and women debaters; 1) Do men have a better win-loss record than women, and 2) Do two Men teams have better win-loss records than mixed sex and two women teams?

The first set of statistics were arrived at by treating each debater as having their own win-loss record. Thus each member of each team was assigned the teams

tournament record. Thus, a two man team with accumulated a 4-2 record was recorded as 8-4, a mixed sex team with a 4-2 record was recorded as a 4-2 for men and a 4-2 for women, while a 4-2 record for a two woman team was recorded as an 8-4 record for women. That methodology then gives us an overall picture of the win-loss records of men and women debaters.

Tournament	M Record	W Record	M Win-Loss %	W Win-Loss
Governor's Cup	93-75	47-57	.553	.451
U.S.F.	96-86	26-36	.527	.419
C.S.U. Fresno	225-226	67-47	.498	.587
Univ. Puget Sound	193-199	107-109	.492	.495
Pacific Lutheran	123-131	53-57	.484	.481
San Luis Obispo	301-243	100-132	.553	.431
Univ. Nevada, Reno	615-594	207-243	.508	.460
Total	1646-1554	607-681	.514	.471

This computation would indicate that men are more successful in debate than are women. At four tournaments men have better than a 50% win-loss record, while women show better than that at only one tournament. Again, it is interesting to note that women at the Northwest Forensic Association tournaments come much closer to achieving parity than at any other tournament, with the exception of Fresno. Also it should be noted that at the two largest tournament, San Luis Obispo and Reno, women have a lower success rate than the overall average. This may, unfortunately, give credence to the belief that women are not as successful at larger, more competitive tournaments.

The figures take on different meaning when team win-loss records are compared. If men are more successful in debate, then we would naturally expect that two man teams would be equally superior to mixed-sex teams and two women teams. This, however, does not statistically hold true. If the average debate team can be expected to win

half of all debate rounds, then one would expect men teams to be significantly better than mixed-sex teams or women teams. However, the results from this research indicate that such an assumption is incorrect.

Tournament	MM W-L	MW W-L	WW W-L	MM %	MW %	WW %
Governor's Cup	35-29	23-17	6-10	.546	.575	.375
U.S.F.	37-27	22-32	4-4	.578	.407	.500
C.S.U. Fresno	85-81	55-49	6-2	.512	.528	.750
Univ. Puget Sound	63-65	67-69	20-20	.492	.492	.500
Pacific Lutheran	44-46	35-39	9-9	.488	.472	.500
San Luis Obispo	123-97	70-86	15-25	.544	.460	.375
U. Nevada, Reno	250-235	121-124	48-60	.510	.483	.444
Total	632-576	388-412	108-130	.523	.486	.453

While two man teams do exhibit a better win-loss ratio than other teams they do not do so with the domination one could expect from previous statistics. Mixed sex teams are superior in two tournaments and exactly even in a third, while two women teams achieve parity or superiority in four of the seven tournaments. The figures from the Reno tournament also support the concept of parity, there is not a large gap between the records of two man teams and those of mixed sex teams. It is difficult to access with a degree of certainity the success of two women teams. One or two superior teams in such a small sampling can significantly alter the results. However, while it is obvious that two woman teams have a lower win-loss ratio than the two other pairs, they cannot be said to be significantly inferior as debate teams.

Summary

This research set out to access the degree of participation and the success, as

measured by win-loss records, of men and women in CEDA tournament competition. The research attempted to find the answer to four basic questions about men and women as debaters. First, it did find that debate still appears to be more attractive to men than to women. Men outnumber women on a better than 2:1 ratio, yet there seems to be more women involved in CEDA than research has indicated participate in policy debat Further research however, may be more revealing. We need to know how many women are initially attracted to CEDA debate and whether the activity encourages or discourages their participation. This research concentrated on experienced debaters during the Spring semester. What may be more important to know is how many women begin the activity in the Fall Semester and decide not to participate beyond the first semester, or beyond the Novice stages of collegiate debate. If we are losing a significant percentage of women in the activity then as coaches and directors we must begin to reevaluate our procedures for making debate attractive to women. Second, the research does claim that generally men have a higher success rate than do women. Much speculation can be made about why this is true. Eakins and Eakins tell us that argumentative speaking is a male activity and that women do not speak or respond to that style well. Beyond that, we also recognize that coaching staffs and judging pools tend to be dominated by males as well. Further research which would attempt to correlate decisions with the gender of the decision maker may reveal to us useful information concerning the success of both male and female debaters within rounds which are judged by male and female coaches. Third, we see a a better parity in tournaments among the make-up of debate teams. While two man teams are still larger than mixed-sex or two woman teams, they do not exist in the same disproportionate ratio as do the number of men and women entered in a tournament. Finally, the research indicates that it is not true that two man teams are superior to mixed-sex or two woman teams. While they do enjoy a slightly higher success

rate than other combinations, the superiority if far from overwhelming and mixed-sex and two women teams also enjoy their moments of high success.

Further and more complete research into the entire question of Forensics as an activity for women, and for people of color, should be of the highest priority in our field. Debate has long claimed, with some distinction and truth, that our activity is intregel to the training and preparation of the leaders of our society. Unfortunately, we all recognize that the vast majority of those students receiving such training do not represent the wide cross section of today's college student population. As women continue their efforts to be an essential source in the development of societal values and behaviors, Forensic programs must be able and willing to provide women with the support and education that we have long recognized as being unique to our discipline.